ON IRAQ AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

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Preface

In the late thirties and early fourties the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party had sought to formulate the broad lines of its ideology. When it was officially founded in April 1947, the Party had almost set its own theory.

However, the Ba'th Party has since its assumption of power in Iraq in the July 17-30, 1968 Revolution, embarked on enriching its own theory. This was quite necessary to meet the new circumstances and needs posed by a new phase of its long course of struggle.

While prospects of progress towards the desired objectives have become brighter than ever, new vitally important tasks related to the application of the Party's own programme have also surfaced.

These considerations clearly express the importance of President Saddam Hussein's talks published in this book on the international policy of the Revolutionary Government of Iraq.

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The national potential and international politics

Saddam Hussein's statement to the
Iraqi Ambassadors in Western Europe and Japan
12 June 1975

Brothers,

All behaviour and every action must be connected with a clear aim. This applies to the principal planners of strategy as well as the principal executives. The value of a clear aim not only lies in directing the will of the planners but also in devising new means and formulae for execution. The clearer the aim the easier will it be for the ambassador or any civil servant below the planning and supervision level to choose the best and most suitable formulae to achieve the aim. We shall remain in great need of your opinions and suggestions as 'headquarters' are always looking for the observations of the 'front lines'. This applies to political action as much as to military operations and other types of activity.

One of the most essential conditions for a successful decision is the availability of accurate information relating to the subject. Hence, when headquarters or rear command wants to make a decision it must rely on the data supplied by front lines or the observation posts, as they say in the armed forces. If this procedure is allowed or indeed required, the operators in the other vital fields, such as the ambassadors, will be expected not only to transmit their observations but also to make the preliminary analysis. They must attach to their observation of any development an adequate amount of analysis, deduction and suggestions. They must indicate its magnitude, its relationships with the social conditions and international policies of the country in question. Other developments or facts outside this sphere

should also be outlined and final conclusions and suggestions should be formulated and referred to the leadership or authority concerned for action. Don't hesitate because of any thought that your information, opinions and analysis may not be needed by the centre which may have better information at its disposal. The mind of the command and headquarters cannot do without the eyes and also the minds of those in the front lines. Every member of the community or member of the state apparatus is expected to use his position for the enrichment of the experience of the Revolution with all that is of value so that the final achievement of the successful march throughout its various phases and tasks is the sum total of the opinions, experiences and actions of all the sections of the state and society which are led by the Party.

In addition to this, the mind of the leadership cannot be conscious, capable and successful without interaction of this kind at all levels of the administration. The mind of the high command may not follow a great deal of what is easily spotted by the field command and observation posts of the front lines.

The offices responsible for policy, whatever the levels of their staff, rely on two fundamental categories: the category of the strategic planners and thinkers, and the category which is directly connected with society and the environment. Therefore, the planners of policy must keep in touch with these two categories all the time, the thinkers and analysts and those involved with society in a detailed and direct way. Any phenomenon or circumstance identified by the latter category, however naively and unconvincingly it is described, must be examined and acted upon. It is up to us to find adequate means of persuasion and methods of approach to render it useful and conducive to success in our work.

It is not sufficient for the State of Iraq to make correct

decisions according to our objective and scientific calculations. It is also necessary to maintain and develop the positive psychological links with the Arab people and the bridge of mutual trust between ourselves and some international circles whose opinions on the decisions adopted mean a great deal to us. Hence, wherever it may be possible our decisions ought to be intelligible, logical and convincing in the eyes of those circles. Regardless of the size and weight of the factors which impel us to take the decision according to our own impressions and convictions, the additional factors may play a role in timing and issuing the decision. As these factors which I have mentioned play their roles in the two important points of timing and issuing, they constitute an essential element in our general calculations and the adoption of the decision in such a way as to achieve its maximum effectiveness in reaching the target.

This is a brief introduction which is indispensable before dealing with the subject of the aims. Now what are our aims?

Our aims at this stage are defined in the Political Report of the 8th Regional Congress of the Party. They guide our work wherever we may be. Therefore, I am not going to talk about this aspect. Instead, I shall discuss the details related to the great aims declared and established in the political report. For instance, how do we follow up events in Europe? What are the European developments on which we should concentrate and keep a watchful eye?

It is needless to say that we must maintain good relations with all countries, but it is not this kind of generalisation to which we should like to draw your attention. What we want to emphasise is the extent, type, direction and purpose of the relationship. These elements are connected with two issues: firstly, common interests and the level and direction of the meeting or interaction of strategies. Secondly, the prospect of our future and its development within the inter-

national community and the area in which we live on the one hand, and, on the other, the prospect of the future of the country or countries which are the other party in the relationship and their own developments and influences within the international community.

That is how we set about defining the dimensions and trends of our relationships with France, West Germany, Sweden, Japan and other states.

You all observe and watch what is going on in the world, whether through the information media or other channels, and see for yourselves that the movement of the world is gaining momentum; speaking politically and not in terms of astronomy, the earth is turning faster than usual.

The world, with its main centres of international politics, is now being formed in a new way and at a faster tempo than previously. In some ways it is identical with the political formation which occurred during and after World War II, though different in many of the forms it takes and more dynamic and comprehensive.

When the world with its main factors that influence international politics is being formed and given its final form within a specific period, the same factors continue to influence the movement, aims and instruments of world politics for a very long time.

Once we concede that world politics have entered a new formative phase we must then step up our efforts and increase our potential for planning and execution to consolidate our position and strengthen our role on this globe at the time and place of our choice. This is what will make us effective and consequential to some extent in the main factors which influence international politics and the direction of the process now and in the future. But when we don't play our role correctly we may easily miss those parts and areas of the globe which we mean to influence and where we may not have another chance for a long time.

Thus we may squander a great opportunity for our will to have an effective role in that process.

Everybody participates in the process of the formation of international politics either as a basic element or catalyst, each from his own standpoint and according to his own circumstances and potential. In our view the next twenty-year period will witness in addition to the present two centres of polarisation the emergence of centres of power and polarisation with political influence at the highest level.

It seems to us that China will become a great centre of influence and polarisation. Europe, with France taking the lead, will become a separate pivot from the United States. Once it decides seriously to enter the field of strategic weapons production on an international level, Japan will play an important role in the process of the formation of South-East Asia. The Arab homeland will be another active centre of polarisation and influence over the next twenty years. Such is our conclusion. For this period, and with this in mind, we must establish the basis of our dealings with the outside world in accordance with what is envisaged and not simply the existing reality. We must work out in that light the basic outlines of our policies towards each major centre of formation, whether in existence at the present or to emerge in the future.

We don't look on this piece of land, here in Iraq, as the ultimate limit of our struggle. It is part of a larger area and broader aims, the area of the Arab homeland and the aims of Arab struggle. We look upon our Iraqi people of twelve million as part of a people of 140 million. We look at the present divisions as an unnatural state which must be ended with unity. This time the work for unity should not overlook two fundamental factors, firstly the economic factor with its own dynamic and functions that affect the goal of unity, and secondly the interaction between our Pan-Arab struggle and the trends and the movement of international politics.

The first factor lies within the responsibilities of the leadership and its institutions within Iraq in pursuing a Pan-Arab policy as a practical course of action. The Party ought to appreciate the relevance of this factor in Pan-Arab terms and take it earnestly and effectively into account in its political and ideological calculations. The achievements of a state of interdependence in the Arab economy by appropriate means is an essential prerequisite for making the citizen in Algeria, for example, feel that he has some interest in Iraq as a result of a more extensive relationship between the economy of Iraq and the economy of Algeria. Similarly the Iraqi citizen would be certain that he has interest in Algeria. This will supplement the considerations of principle of the struggle for unity which will permeate the economic policies of Iraq through the mutual influence and interactions of the economic policies of the Arab homeland.

In our Pan-Arab struggle we ought to discount the possibility that Arab unity will not face any exceptional obstacles. We must not overlook the relevance of a convergence of strategies and certain interests, in one form or another, between some major polarisation centres on the one hand and our struggle for unity on the other.

If such polarisation centres are hostile to our unionist action, can we suppose that their attitudes will not adversely affect the Pan-Arab struggle? As we underline the decisive role of the Pan-Arab and national will, we must not delude ourselves and neglect the importance and fundamental nature of international factors and their influence on the unionist struggle and the sum total of our Pan-Arab and national struggle. On such a basis, we should with determination strive as Arabs and Iraqis within the Arab nation and not leave this merely to time and its effect. We must have our share in the forthcoming process of the formation of the world and guide it in a direction which will dissuade many important polarisation centres from strategically

opposing the unionist struggle, whether in the stage of realisation or preparation of the basic conditions for unity, as incompatible with their general policy and global aims. Such a consideration places on our shoulders new tasks of winning further support from some of the present or future polarisation centres. In the light of all this, it is also our duty to view the multiplication of such centres as compatible with our Pan-Arab and national struggle. Whenever there are many polarisation centres in the world, our chances for manoeuvre and action in international politics are increased, and whenever such centres become fewer in number and greater in concentration, we may be harassed. It is better that our fundamental issues are tackled by ten different parties including ourselves, than to have them in the hands of two or three, whether we are with them or not, especially when they, rather than we, carry the final and decisive weight in major matters of policy and when they clearly stand in diametrical opposition to our interests. It is necessary, for example, that the influential advocates of European unity understand that there is no contradiction or opposition between the unity of the Arab homeland and a unity of Europe free from colonialism and imperialism. It will be even better if we can find common links of legitimate interest — carefully thought out politically and ideologically — to support this approach. Therefore, and as a result of various other considerations, we have been determined to give special treatment to our relationship with France. It is our opinion that France will play a central role, or perhaps a decisive role in the unity of Europe.

In talking about the direction of our influence, *vis-à-vis* the European centre of polarisation, we must not overlook the role of China in international politics. This role has not yet attained its appropriate magnitude for many well-known reasons, including China's technical backwardness in comparison with the United States, the Soviet Union,

Japan and some of the Western European countries. This situation is bound to alter drastically in the next few years. Some European states, and perhaps Japan as well, are going to play an important part in the technical development of China within certain specified limits. For this reason, and also for a number of other considerations, China will acquire a major role in international politics. According to the statement of its leaders, China seems to be one of the most sympathetic countries to our Pan-Arab struggle against the Zionist entity and towards Arab unity. But we must recognise the extent of the effects of the Soviet-Chinese conflict. We must expect the future development of China's policies and international relations to make that country more cautious in its attitudes and pronouncements on the Arab-Zionist conflict and Arab unity, especially when China becomes one of the major polarisation centres with definite responsibilities for such attitudes. Other centres of polarisation will exert mutual political influence on it, with negative or positive results. Take the Soviets, for example. The things they used to say and believe twenty years ago about the Arab struggle are quite different now. What the French used to say and do five years ago are not the same today. There are significant developments in the attitudes of many countries for various reasons.

If there are to be many polarisation centres, we must confine ourselves to one centre only and forget about the others. We must carry weight in specific centres through mutual interests or through the convergence of strategies or both, because we cannot carry the same weight and force in all the centres of polarisation. Should China's centre become substantially more effective in international politics, the viewpoint of the Soviet centre will inevitably be affected, through the Soviet-Chinese ideological conflict, and through the two countries' struggle for ideological and political influence in our area and the entire world.

Undoubtedly the Soviet position will influence, and be influenced by, the Chinese position. All this will be reflected in Arab-Soviet relations and Arab-Chinese relations.

As for Japan, we have mentioned that Japan has an influential part to play in the formation process of South-East Asia. This role will gather strength whenever Japan reaches the point of deciding to enter the field of manufacturing certain strategic weapons on a large scale. There is no doubt that once it decides to do so, Japan will in a very few years reach a highly developed level of armament capability, whether in electronics or in the nuclear field.

How arms and armaments are viewed in international politics

We believe that no country with serious problems which relies on importing its weapons can claim to be absolutely independent with regard to many calculations of politics and its practical requirements. We should be fully conscious of the decisive weight of two interdependent factors with their own mutual political effects: a solid economic base and an effective military capability. A seriously effective military capability cannot be obtained without a solid economic base in addition to other considerations. There are for instance certain essential factors in the makeup of China which provide its considerable influence in international politics. Once out of America's grip which stifles its desire to arm itself and express its national distinctiveness, Japan will also be able to play an important role. One of the principal reasons which might lead Japan to large-scale armament is its need to maintain its lines of communication since it imports all the requirements for its industries, including fuel and raw materials, apart from other developments and considerations of the international situation. The process of formation in international politics,

including what happens in South-East Asia and the emergence of China with its additional weight besides the Soviet influence in the area, will make it possible, with some flexibility and manoeuvring on the part of many countries, including Japan itself, to reduce the influence and pressure of the United States on Japan in the coming years. This is what we have to consider in our dealings with Japan and the South-East Asian states, especially those that are newly liberated. Relationships of this kind acquire special significance with a view to the growing policies of solidarity and coordination in the continent.

We are called upon to influence the course of Arab policies effectively, in accordance with our conception. It will be extremely important and valuable for the future, if the Arabs show their ability to unite at least at a minimum level in policies and attitudes and thereby influence the process of international politics. But if we confront this process divided, our capacity for influence will not have the same value or required directions.

Dealing with the Polarisation Centres

I have mentioned that there will be new centres of polarisation. In addition to the two crucial centres of the Soviet Union and the United States there are others which are still in the stage of formation, endeavouring to reach the level of the two other centres. If we manage to play an effective role in this process, it will be reflected in our struggle for Arab unity and our relation with the future polarisation centres concerned. Therefore our will must have some role in this process. We must not stay remote from it or remain static awaiting its completion and then deal with the new centres according to special policies.

On the other hand, we must not deal with all the centres of polarisation in the same manner or degree. Our general

policy should define the extent of our dealing with the polarisation centres of Europe. Our way of dealing with France, for example, is different from that with West Germany, and our dealing with Italy must differ from that with Britain. It is not sufficient to deal with all the elements of the polarisation centres in general, but we must select the more important elements and concentrate more fully on these in the degree, extent and direction of the relationship. This is what makes our relations with the Soviet Union different from those with the United States and our relations with the Soviet Union different from those with Poland. Similarly, our relation with France is not the same as our relation with Britain, and so on.

Three or four days ago, we had a meeting with the committee of the Progressive Pan-Arab National Front, in which I said plainly:

"The flexibility which we need in one part of our activities in foreign policy, whether in regard to the Arabs or non-Arabs, should not extend into our own country and demolish the social, economic, psychological and political foundations of the Revolution. These foundations should continue to grow and act as a source of illumination of high intensity to achieve our goals. While we are acting with flexibility in our Arab and international policies, we ought to strengthen and replenish the principles and their practical reflections on the socioeconomic and political reality of Iraq so that it may become an effective, illuminating and influential model."

In this place, Iraq, political action must be extremely vigilant against the forces and interests of reversion and the elements and movements hostile to our independence and our revolutionary way of changing society. Such a balanced view makes no contradiction between our flexibility in foreign policy and the coordination of the process to make our model of new construction one that is revolutionary,

fortified and illuminating. We think that the old style of information, as used by Ahmad Said[1], with its slanders, attacks and denunciations ought to be abandoned. Those whom we attack now, or who attack us, are governments as we are. To say that our principles are better than theirs is not the most useful approach. We must prove this in the policies pursued by the government. It is our duty to strengthen the means of communications within the Arab homeland by all possible methods, and bolster the interdependence of the Arab economy. We shall then find that it is no longer possible to isolate any experiment in the Arab homeland, whether a success or failure, or prevent its penetration and influence. Arab citizens, whether in Algeria, Morocco or Iraq, can never be kept insulated from it. If the experiment has a long-range power of illumination, its light will ultimately reach its targets. Arab citizens will then be capable of comparison and choice according to their conviction. That is how our model will be decisive outside our frontiers, thanks also to the effort of the Pan-Arab branches of our Party in education and enlightenment. But if the model adopted in North Yemen is better than our model, its influence will reach Iraq, even if North Yemen keeps quiet and refrains from attacking us in the old style. This discussion does not exclude the importance of information and propaganda presented purposefully and quietly. What I meant is to draw attention to the mistake and danger inherent in strident information and demagogic propaganda.

The effects of American defeat in South-East Asia

However hard the United States may try to limit the effects of the psychological reactions to its defeat in South-

[1] Director of Egypt's Voice of the Arabs radio station in the 1950s and 1960s.

East Asia, many of these negative effects will remain and influence the course of international policies including those of Western Europe and Japan. At any rate, we have to recognise a number of facts. The United States was not expelled by conventional methods. If it wanted, it could have stayed longer in South-East Asia and continued to bear the local and international losses. But the United States realised that, however long it stayed there, sooner or later it would be expelled and decided accordingly to shorten the time before this happened. This decision played a particular role in the eventual process of expulsion which took place in South-East Asia. It was taken so that the USA should not lose the chance of concentrating with special intensity on other areas more vital for its global strategy. One of these areas which require an exceptional effort and concentration is our area, the Middle East. The Arab region occupies an exceptional place within that area.

Another crucial factor in the expulsion of the United States from South-East Asia was the will of the people of Vietnam. There were also other factors, such as the substantial aid and support given to the Vietcong by China and the Soviet Union, each according to its capacity and circumstances.

Furthermore, the United States estimated and believed that its departure at that time might help to accentuate the problems between the Soviet Union and China, on the one hand, and between Vietnam and these two powers on the other.

What demands special attention in our political calculations is the question of European security and Western Europe's fear of the threat from the Soviet Union, the effect of this fear on the US-European alliance and its reflection on the degree of US influence on international politics.

Europe is always more anxious about the military concentrations of the Warsaw Pact and the probable deploy-

ment of the conventional weapons of the Warsaw Pact powers than the use of atomic weapons at the present time. According to the estimates of Western Europe, the members of the Warsaw Pact are capable of sweeping through Western Europe, or an important part of it, with the conventional forces deployed along its frontier, with their advantage of superiority in numbers and sometimes in quality over the conventional weapons of the opposing European states. There are two different desires involved in the question of European security, each with its own reasons for achieving it according to certain trends: the desire of Western Europe to get rid of the threatening spectre of the Warsaw Pact and achieve a certain measure of stability as well as freedom to evolve its destiny free from the American grip; and the desire of the Soviet Union to free its forces for the confrontation with China and other international commitments.

What is being said, that the United States has reconsidered its political stand *vis-à-vis* the Middle East, is correct, but its reassessment of its Middle Eastern policy does not affect the targets of this policy. It is rather concerned with the best possible method for achieving these aims. The essence of the imperialist policy of the United States and its support for the Zionist entity in our homeland still remains unchanged. The basic additional factor in America's new policy is the strengthening of its grip on the oil of the Middle East in the service of US interests. The alliance of Europe and Japan with the United States remains based on the realistic need for the supply of oil which is guaranteed by US policies, in addition to the other considerations. It was the United States which after World War II played a decisive part in the expulsion of Europe from many rich oil fields and undermined the unilateral character of European policies in the Middle East. Thus Europe was chased out of Iran and Saudi Arabia, while in

other areas it was joined by the United States on an extensive scale.

Oil for the United States is no longer a question of desire for self-sufficiency and the safeguarding of a strategic material, nor is it a form of gaining profit by exploitation only. It has become a decisive element in American global policies with particular effect on its relations with Western Europe and Japan. Hence, the United States will not be content with the present *status quo*, but will try to curtail the influence of Europe in the oil affairs of this area and replace it with its own.

America and some European states will have the lion's share of the joint oil[1] of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other countries, so it is not like the liberated oil of Iraq, which we can sell in accordance with our policies and interests. The major share of the joint oil will be under long-term contracts or economic and political controls which have this effect.

The United States and some Western European countries will have specific shares in proportion to their influence on the governments of the oil-producing states, something which will affect the relations between the United States and Europe. It will also affect the alliances which strengthen America's grip on Europe and Japan in a way that consolidates the US position and influence in world politics.

In discussing international politics, we must not forget the basic and decisive factor, namely, the will of the peoples. There are two approaches to international politics: the first ignores the effect of international politics on the Pan-Arab and national struggle, which is wrong, and the second makes the destiny of our Pan-Arab and national struggle a prisoner of international politics, which is a deviation. First and foremost, the will of the people has the decisive role in

[1] i.e. oil in which foreign companies still have a share in the production.

the fundamental directions of world policies, over and above other factors. If the balance is tipped occasionally in the other direction in certain circumstances and issues, this must not be taken as a general rule. On such a basis the effects of the American stand in the area should be examined. The question of what the future will bring is one in which the will of the people plays a crucial part. It may be that the future will favour the United States for some time, but in the longer term, the future will favour the peoples. Even within a limited perspective, there may be some surprises which will tip the balance in favour of the Arab struggle, as happened in certain episodes of the October War and its aftermath.

It has become evident that America's involvement in an area of conflict as a party hostile to the will of the peoples through the conventional imperialist forms will turn this will towards an anti-American stand, regardless of the strong grip of America's local allies, the reactionary regimes. Soon after the October War of 1973 we called for the use of oil as a weapon in the battle, but the Arab oil states first rejected the idea and then adopted it partially ten days later. What made them take that position? It wasn't for the personal satisfaction of many of the rulers, but rather for the great embarrassment which they felt as a result of our decision to nationalise the American and Dutch shares in Basra Petroleum Company and the upsurge of the pressure of our Arab people in that direction.

After that experience, the United States can no longer be sure that considerable reactions will not occur in this field if another war should break out between the Arabs and the Zionist entity. This is one of the pressing factors on America actually to seek a way of putting the matter in cold storage for some time at least. The Arab people are moving and demanding from their governments the nationalisation of oil where it is still not nationalised. Yes, it is difficult for

the people to act with vigour and demand the cancellation of the long-term purchase contracts or the agreements with complex technical formulas which require special skill and knowledge to understand their deviationist character. Therefore, certain monopolist companies want to revise their concessions and replace them by long-term purchase contracts or other forms of agreement which will practically realise for them the bulk of the advantages of the concession agreements and yet spare the imperialist powers any political surprises which might cause harm to their interests and policies in general and their oil policies in particular. All this is happening in the light of the development of the new oil policy in which Iraq is playing a leading role in this vital part of the world.

The International Energy Agency (IEA)

France is benefiting from the resolutions of this Agency in two respects, namely the reduction of prices and the securing of energy sources, due to the pressures and policies of the Agency against the oil-producing states. France is also benefiting from its opposition to the Agency by establishing positive relations with the producer countries. The French decision not to seek membership of the Agency does not imply a policy contrary to the main trends of its policies, but rather a protest against it because it is undermining the position of France in its dealings with the Third World, including the oil-producing states; besides the considerations of independence in French politics.

That is our evaluation of the French decision not to join the IEA. Yet, although we understand the motives behind this decision, we have to deal with it in a manner which will not hinder the drive of France to become another centre of influence in international oil policies, which will find in dealing on an equal footing with the producer countries a sound

approach for the attainment of legitimate interests. We should endeavour to help this centre acquire its own distinction in one form or another from the designs of the energy agency led by the United States. This is the reason for our consent to the French invitation to the meeting of the oil producer and consumer states, or what is called the North-South dialogue, to discuss the questions of energy, raw materials, the transfer of technology and other obviously momentous issues. We have discussed this subject with the French and told them that we refuse to deal with the issue of energy only but to link it together with the question of raw materials in a form which would reopen the discussion on the whole world economy and the causes of its deterioration, including the international monetary situation, its effective treatment and the question of the transfer of technology to the countries of the Third World. We pressed on with this view during the Algiers Conference[1].

It is known that the disintegration of the NATO Pact will spur America to search for other devices to bolster up the pact. One such device is the IEA. The United States exploited the circumstances, as I have mentioned, of the rise in prices with all the associated manias of that time. We were against that mania over prices and expressed our opinion in writing and verbally. Iraq was the first country in the world to warn against that hasty approach of raising prices crazily. This country has warned that raising prices in that manner and within that span of time would serve America's policies and strengthen its centre of polarisation by reinforcing its relationship with the Western European countries and Japan which suffered from the sudden and sharp rise of prices. Indeed, other countries from the Third World may follow the same path. Furthermore, the increase

[1] The Conference of the heads of state of developing nations held in Algiers in February 1975.

in prices along the lines which we criticised was bound to enable the United States to export many of the negative features of the situation, including inflation, to Europe by diverse means.

The present hold of the United States owes its strength to political factors affecting the main lines of European policies. The principal factor is the Soviet-American global conflict and the two opposing umbrellas of power. The American one covers Western Europe for obvious reasons. In addition, Europe, or certain important parts of it, have their own economic justifications for the link with the United States including the latter's aid to them as well as the presence of the American octopus in the form of companies, capital and investment in Europe. The European countries which may influence future European-American policies are France, West Germany, Italy and Britain followed by the other countries in varying orders and degrees. It is well known that the economic situation in Italy is unsatisfactory at the present time despite all the efforts exerted. There is no stability in Italy because of the fierce conflicts between the various political currents. Therefore the future may reveal many surprises in one form or another.

West Germany, as you see, is trying slowly to develop a somewhat independent economic policy serving its national interests. Although this attempt is still limited at the present time, it is bound to evolve and take a more serious course in the future. This will lead to some contradiction of interests between the West German economy and that of the United States and some European countries.

We have already talked sufficiently about France which has found its interest well served in the Gaullist policies since the days of General de Gaulle. Not only did the French embrace these policies for reasons of principle associated with national independence but they also found

an economic advantage in pursuing a policy of their own in their relations with the countries of the Third World in view of the sensitivity of these countries towards America and some European states. Many Third World countries feel less sensitive nowadays and are no longer sensitive towards France. This is particularly the case in the Arab East. The French will therefore maintain this approach in their general attitudes in foreign affairs. The distinct policies of France are no longer a secret, but a recognised fact in the political relations between many states and France.

Britain and its relations with America

The economic condition of Britain is bad now, but as you know it may relatively improve as a result of many developments including the probable oil discoveries in the North Sea. A great deal depends on whether the oil production from the North Sea will satisfy Britain's needs totally or only partially and whether there will be any surplus for export in the near future. Such questions will play important roles in deciding the direction and nature of Anglo-American relations.

On the basis of this brief analysis and some other factors, we can say that the next twenty years will witness the development of the centre of Europe away from America. During the last year, we have undoubtedly given a certain amount of our attention in the Arab and international fields to the cultivation of the Euro-Arab dialogue to encourage the process of European distinction from American policies, i.e. the type of relationship established by Western Europe with the Arabs and the countries of the Third World will have a strong effect in eradicating or weakening the influence of the United States on Western Europe or on some of its leading countries, apart from the other considerations of international politics. Oil, raw materials and

other mutual interests will be essential factors in this respect. Yet, as we view the situation in this way, we should not forget that some Arabs are under the influence of Britain and America. Some of them tend towards British policy or fall under its control whilst others do the same with the Americans in part of their policies. America has a special potency in Arab circles and in nullifying the Euro-Arab dialogue or diverting it from its above-mentioned objectives. When the United States discovered that nothing could disrupt this dialogue, it tried the same game through Europe by encouraging some of its states in the European Economic Community (EEC) to adopt the infamous decision to make a new deal with the Zionist entity[1]. The decision was received negatively by Arab circles. Some reacted with natural and genuine feeling whilst others were not altogether free from American influence which aims to create a crisis between the Arabs and Europe and particularly France.

Therefore, and as a result of other causes including the lack of awareness among some Arabs, voices were raised calling for an end to the Euro-Arab dialogue. But we have a different standpoint which may be summed up by saying that the Arabs should give a reasoned reaction against the decision of the Common Market states, drawing their attention to their mistake and warning them against any continuation of this policy. This reaction, however, should not hold up the Euro-Arab dialogue. At the same time we ought to expose clearly the role of the United States and its real purpose so that our reaction may not miss its target and

[1] On 11 May 1975 a third agreement was signed between the EEC and the Zionist enemy. The first and the second agreements were signed in 1964 and 1970. According to the new agreement the Zionist entity has become the first state 'which has been accepted within the free trade areas which are to be set up by the nine member centres of the EEC and the Mediterranean states'.

hence enable this role to achieve its purpose both politically and psychologically.

Our Relations with the Neutral States of Europe

Sweden, Norway, Finland, Austria and Switzerland are countries which are trying to maintain their own policies and look upon themselves as neutral states, notwithstanding their accord in general terms of politics with the rest of the European countries and in some respects even with the United States. However, they are anxious to uphold their neutrality as it has been publicly declared. Our serious attention must include these countries. The point which I should like to point out to all brothers is that we are a country of twelve million people of a limited size and with an administration merely seven years old, shortly entering its eighth year. We are keen to have an untraditional value in international politics. To adopt the traditional means used by the great powers will not bring us any nearer to the untraditional value which we seek. Therefore, each ambassador should propose from his post the correct path which we should follow to develop our relations with this or that country. He should chart for us the route on which we shall not be crowded out by other countries and which is suited to our potential, ideals and circumstances; a route where special character is associated with our own national characteristics and with a potential effectiveness equal to, or even greater than, that of the conventional means used by other countries.

What we must maintain in our foreign policy is consistent and high-principled frankness. There is an additional need for clarity and frankness in our foreign policy derived from the fact that we are a small country. We must not compete, for example, with Britain in the old trickeries, manoeuvres and duplicity which she has mastered so well in

international politics. We must find other means compatible with our capability, age and principles which are effective in international politics and prominent among the nations of the world. They should be distinctive from all the other means adopted by big states like Britain, France, West Germany, America and the Soviet Union. We are served in this endeavour by a number of factors including our frankness, even if it annoys other people. The frankness which we maintain and our clarity in foreign policy make everyone we deal with fully aware of the areas of our agreement and disagreement, the extent and basis of any such agreement, and all the reasons behind it.

We believe that such a policy, although occasionally irksome to some people, is the correct and principled approach that will eventually make a country of twelve million into one with a certain weight in international affairs, besides other considerations. Although its results may fail to arouse admiration in some circles, this policy is bound to compel respect.

2
Detente and the Arab-Zionist conflict

Interview given by Saddam Hussein
to the Egyptian journalist Sakina al-Sadat
on 19 January 1977

Question. What are the future prospects which you expect for Iraq in the field of agricultural and industrial development?

Answer. Of course, the general outline is recognised in all countries, i.e. that the purpose of investment in development is the improvement of the social, cultural and economic conditions of the people and their steady progress to keep pace with the universal progress of mankind. As far as the development of Iraq is concerned, there are additional objectives which are urgently required. The government in our country is working for the establishment of socialism and is embarking on vital fields of socialist application. One of the important features of socialist construction is to provide every citizen with the opportunity of employment with a reasonable and defined income in accordance with the socialist concept and policy of answering the needs of the people on the basis of the conditions and character at each stage. Now to provide every able citizen with the opportunity of work, our movement must maintain a continuous horizontal expansion in the form of building new projects which can provide employment opportunities in keeping with the growth of population. To us, construction and development are not only part of the general effort to ensure the progress of the country as a whole, but also a means of meeting an urgent need as well as a particular form of socialist application. The other thing we have in

mind is our conviction that the conflict between the Arab nation and the Zionist entity will continue for a long time, notwithstanding the different opinion of a number of our Arab brothers. As this is the age of science and technology, as it is called, the growth of the nation's scientific and technological potential requires that attention be paid to development as a practical field for evolving and improving any scientific and technological ideas related to our national and Pan-Arab characteristics. Development also provides the economic basis to face the military, economic and political eventualities associated with this conviction: our belief in a continued conflict between the Arab nation and the Zionist enemy backed by the imperialists, who are feeding and strengthening this conflict.

Q. There was a scheme which called for a million Egyptian fellahin *(cultivators) to work in Iraq. Recruitment of these peasants, however, has been discontinued. What is the reason for that?*

A. Our desire to achieve this must be set against its political and psychological background. When we open our doors and call upon our Egyptian brothers to help us open the doors of Egypt for the Egyptian farmers and others to come to us, we are not aiming by this move to achieve merely economic objectives, as some people have supposed. Our scheme cannot be reduced to the concept that we have land and water but no cultivators. This is not the fundamental reason for the idea. It is rather due to our desire to put our ideas into practice and to strike at 'regionalism', to strike at the regionalist outlook which was founded in the minds of some people by the boundaries which have been created for many years. It is to let the citizens of Iraq and other Arab countries feel that since the accession of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party to office, the ideas of the Pan-Arab struggle have ceased to be merely abstract and that

the time has come to apply them according to our programme of action. When we say this land belongs to all Arabs we assume that this is also the case in practice. Hence, those who are working in the field of industry find Arabs working with them side by side. The same thing happens in agriculture, planning and information. This is one of the devices for putting the ideas of the Pan-Arab struggle into practice on the basis that Iraq is the land of all Arabs, just the same as Egypt or any other Arab state, according to our opinion.

This is the origin of the idea. We have not discontinued its application. I spoke to President Sadat personally on the subject and he promised to instruct his officials to facilitate the departure of the Egyptian peasants. We discussed this in 1974 within the Arab Summit Conference in Rabat. Implementation of the idea is therefore still continuing on all fronts. On the basis of the same view, we have absolutely no objection to Iraqis leaving for Egypt to work in agriculture, commerce or any other field, because we look on Egypt as our other country, an Arab country of which we feel proud. However, new ideas and practices which form part of a broad concept should not be hastily implemented in a way that threatens the original concept. Therefore, the implementation of the concept or any part of it must be preceded with the preparation of all the requisites for success. In this area, we are always anxious to provide these requisites for every step we make. Only when we finish with this step, do we start with the next one and so on.

If we don't prepare all the satisfactory conditions for the Egyptian farmers before their arrival, the implementation of the idea may cause them unhappiness in one way or another. We are aware of the nature of Egyptian citizens. Basically, they are not used to emigration to their larger homeland outside Egypt. The attachment of the Egyptians to their land is very strong, particularly for the farmers. We

understand this. Ideas are not sufficient in themselves to sustain men and overcome their nostalgia for their narrower homeland, Egypt. All these thoughts come to our mind whenever we want to take a new step. We say, therefore, that we must prepare the practical requisites before taking the next step. To conclude, we have not discontinued that project and will continue to ask our brothers in Egypt, with President Sadat at their head, to help us in carrying out the idea.

Q. Your Excellency is aware of the problems besetting Egypt at the present time. What part is Iraq taking in helping to solve some of these problems?

A. As regards our notion of Egypt's needs and our understanding of our ideas, we always recognise that all the help we have given and mean to give to Egypt falls short of the obligation. Perhaps you have an idea about the modest assistance which we have rendered to Egypt during the past years in development matters and other fields. You can peruse the projects which we submitted to Egypt and examine the causes for their delay. I prefer that you peruse them yourself as they stand because I am always anxious to be accurate. I don't want to go into everything. Maybe I can't be accurate in dealing with some of the details. With the help of the Minister of Planning, Mr Adham Hussein, you can examine the details of the fraternal aid which we gave to Egypt in the form of gifts or otherwise.

To deal with the political side of this question, I repeat what I have just said. In the light of principles, of the difficult conditions of Egypt and of our feeling of what must be offered, we think, regardless of others' views, that whatever we give to Egypt is less than required. But this was what the circumstances allowed in the light of the practical formulae and the particular situation. I don't suppose, however, that we or our brothers in Egypt imagine that what was given,

small or great, is the end of the journey and the final chapter in our dealings with our Arab people in Egypt.

Q. We appreciate that Iraq is like Egypt. I have seen that it suffers from the same problems that are suffered by the developing countries.

A. To give you an idea about Iraq, I shall make a quick sketch of it for you.

When we took over the government in 1968, we did not find anything substantial left to us. Of the most prominent assets we inherited were two palaces -- the Republican Palace and the National Assembly.

Even the question of frontiers, and demarcations of territory and sovereignty, which concern rulers throughout the world regardless of their type of regimes, were left unsettled for us by the previous governments, together with some complicated problems with our neighbours. We also inherited an empty treasury and a shattered economy that was entirely dependent on oil royalties which were meagre. In 1969 our oil revenues amounted to 169,730,000 dinars[1]. In the nationalisation year of 1972 the oil revenues estimate before nationalisation amounted to 218,576,000 dinars.

The first act of nationalisation occurred in June 1972. The country had to pass through difficult circumstances for a whole year — the nationalisation year.

Therefore we had to live a full year under very hard circumstances which continued until the submission of the companies to the reality on 1 March 1973. From 1972 to the second half of 1973, Iraq had to live under emergency conditions. No improvement was recorded in our financial situation before 1 March 1973, or rather until 1974 to be precise. The improvement I am referring to is only a comparative one in relation to the emergency period and the

[1] One Iraqi dinar = £ 1.50.

preceding years. The comparatively good financial years are 1974, 1975 and 1976. Iraq cannot possibly be compared on this basis with the other Arab oil-producing countries, especially the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula states and Libya which have revenue balances deposited with banks over many years. Things in Iraq started to improve during the past two years as we mentioned at the Summit Conference which discussed the help required by our brothers in the confrontation states. I said at that time: 'We have brothers there who are giving their blood. Our minimum duty is to support them with funds.'

This is the situation in Iraq, with no room for savings. Yet we have given aid to our Arab brothers. Our financial situation, comparatively speaking, has been good only for the years 1974, 1975 and 1976. You can look around at the conditions of our people of whom a large section are still heavily in need of the simplest necessities of life. In the light of the urgent considerations expected from us by our people, we bear a great responsibility. Our people keep reminding us that they have struggled under the leadership of the Party or along its own roads and helped the Party to take over the government in order that it may carry out its aims and build up socialism. The people demand housing from us, stable opportunities for the employment of every able citizen and the provision of the necessary services and other guarantees.

We are saying this to give our brothers a clear picture. When they think of us as an oil state, they must also remember these facts — that in comparison with the other Arab oil states, Iraq has become an oil state only during the last three years.

Q. How does the Iraqi citizen overcome the problems of development? I have heard that to solve the housing problem you lend citizens five thousand dinars at a very low interest for building a house.

A. As a developing country with some financial resources at our disposal, especially in the last three years, we must have a schedule of priorities. We have not given the social services first priority until the beginning of this year. During the past three years we gave priority to investments in industrial and agricultural developments. Any country with limited resources must have its priorities in this field. Citizens don't appreciate this point as planners do; they don't understand the social, economic and cultural background and the consequences of these priorities. But the existence of a political party leading the masses and the existence of mass organisations of the workers and peasants, which are called the democratic professional organisations, help us to overcome the problems and bottlenecks in the planning field. They also help us to bridge any gap and decide the responsibility of the state department concerned. You have probably acquired an idea about the seminars which we have organised for increasing production[1]. I am not saying that we have no serious problems at hand. Development is a new subject for the Arabs in general, and Egypt was the Arab state which pioneered in this field. Yet it has faced and is still facing complex problems. With Iraq's attention only recently turned seriously towards development, it is natural that we should have economic and social and even psychological problems during the development process, especially rapid development. Some failures are inevitable in certain fields and activities, but the continuous follow-up maintained by the leadership of the ABSP in these areas, the constant frankness and the democratic collective participation in over-

[1]These seminars were held between 7 and 9 September 1976 to discuss the factors affecting the decreasing productivity in the industrial sector and were attended by leading officials, technicians and union leaders.

coming those problems, will insure their treatment and solutions.

Q. Three years have passed since the establishment of the Progressive Pan-Arab National Front in Iraq. Although it is still a new experiment, how does your Excellency regard it? What are the prospects of this experiment?

A. When we talk about the Front, our discussion must not be confined to the theoretical framework only. Nor should we separate the political acts and other undertakings of the Front from the past history of Iraq. To evaluate the formula applied now in Iraq we and all our Arab brothers in Iraq, Egypt and everywhere else must bear in mind that the members of the Front had been engaged in armed struggle until a very late date before its formation.

The Kurdish Democratic Party were fighting us in the mountains from 1961 to March 1970. Mulla Mustafa al-Barzani took up arms once more on 11 March 1974 and went on fighting until his final defeat on 6 March 1975. We also had armed clashes with the Communist Party from 1959 until the overthrow of the ABSP in 1963. This was followed by difficult times and complicated circumstances dominating our relationship with the Communist Party well into the early years of Revolution. Despite this past history, we went on to establish the Front which served as a basic means of expressing our determination to extend democracy and the political participation of the national forces and the masses of the people in the new experiment at all levels. In our view the prospects of the Progressive Front are not limited to short-term objectives. In order that it may have some specific value and weight in the conditions of revolutionary construction it must not be simply a temporary association. As far as we are concerned the Front was not formed in response to an emergency situation or transient conditions which might require its dissolu-

tion after the end of such an emergency. It was set up for the construction of a free, independent and socialist Iraq with Pan-Arab objectives. We conceive the prospect of the Front's continuation in the light of our concept of the continuity of the revolution and its objectives. We also believe absolutely that the ABSP plays the leading role in the Front. Any member of the Front believing in these concepts will continue along these lines indefinitely, and any member who may at any time find it impossible to continue working within this framework and with these principles will drop out.

Q. Now that the Kurdish insurgency is liquidated, what are your Excellency's projections for the future of stability in the North, and the prevention of a repetition of the same episode?

A. I shall answer your question by saying that the sum total of our projections is as follows:

To our people in Iraq, the Kurdish question is a nationalist and democratic issue in its essence and reality. It simply means that there is an Iraqi people with its own distinct national characteristics which is bent on cultivating them locally within one Iraq, one Iraqi people, one Iraqi territory. In its essence, it is therefore a legitimate national and democratic matter. We look at it in this way regardless of the sinister tendencies which found their way into the ranks of the Kurds, leading eventually to the fighting of 1974, and despite all the difficulties which we had to encounter. Now what is the basic guarantee against the repetition of the same circumstances? We cannot guarantee that the Kurdish question will not be used as a hostile vessel against the Revolution, or that its crew will not change from time to time according to variations in international strategies, and their effect on the Middle East, and the Arab homeland in particular. We cannot be sure either that this question will

not flare up again in its critical and exceptional aspects if its essence, as we have explained it, is not fully understood and taken into account. The fundamental aim which we always keep in mind is to prevent the occurrence of conditions which may affect the clear vision of some sections of our Kurdish people. Such conditions make them unable to distinguish on the one level between those who want to exploit the Kurdish question as an agent for international strategies which are essentially hostile to the Kurdish people as much as to the question of liberty, common destiny and a promising future of the Iraqi people in general and, on the other, those honest people who view the Kurdish question from the angle of liberation as a nationalist and democratic issue within Iraq and also as a patriotic question remaining within the unity of all Iraqis and their independence in their own country.

Looking at it within its national framework, the Kurdish question is a purely internal matter which sometimes takes dubious forms because of the intrusion of foreign influences, and stands aggressively in the way of the national movement and struggle for the construction of a new society.

Q. Iraq has a certain attitude towards the Palestine question as it does not believe in peaceful solutions. If this is the case, will it be possible to consider reactivating the northern front? What is the position in regard to the Iraqi-Syrian dispute and its bearing on this subject?

A. Before you ask me this as a journalist, and I answer you as an official member of the Government, I should like to explain our position in simple words. Now what exactly is our line of thinking? We believe that our Arab brothers have two erroneous conceptions which sometimes indicate deviation in some aspects in their view of the balance of world power and the effects of current international trends

on our national issues. Some people consider the national cause a prisoner of international trends, whether in its renaissance, triumph or failure. They believe that everything is a question of fate, and that there is no room for our will to modify and influence the international trends and act freely regardless of their essence or direction. I should like to explain this whole matter to you. Please give some attention to this subject.

There are those who take no account of international trends and the balance of world power in their appreciation of the situation; they allow no place for them in their calculations. Such people say that with our national will we can determine everything and plot our own course without any need to understand the currents of world affairs, their directions or their effects, etc.

These are the two tendencies which are prevalent in the Arab homeland. There was a period in which the Arab nation took no notice of what was going on outside the Arab homeland and its various regions. It was believed that anything happening within one country could be dealt with freely and regardless of international political developments, their effect and their relevance. The same view was held in regard to any issue involving one Arab country and a neighbouring country. This stage has now ended and has been replaced by another in which the Arabs are taking an interest in international politics. Some people, however, have overstated the effects of international developments on our national questions and imagined that they can annul our national will and its capacity to exert continuing influence. Now how do we look on international politics and do we take them into account?

As a starting point let us assume that the effect and direction of international developments comprise a number of elements which allow for the role of countries other than the United States and Soviet Union. This role has its effect in

shaping the direction of the international policies of the United States and the Soviet Union. When the United States, for example, finds that all the Latin-American and Afro-Asian countries support its policies, and that Europe, Australia and Japan are its allies, it shapes its international policy towards Arab issues accordingly and deals with the Arab case in question with hostility and disdain. This is particularly true when the United States finds the Arabs unable to play their hand properly, influence the trend of international affairs and use their potential correctly. But when the United States finds that its attitude is meeting opposition in the Latin-American, Asian, African and Arab countries it will be forced to modify its policies in accordance with the national policies of the countries concerned. We therefore believe as Arabs, whether Iraqis or Egyptians, that we have a role to play in shaping international policies and their direction. This means that such policies must not be decided at any time without regard to our national will. We must have a part in shaping them.

Some discussion arises here over the question of the Arab-Zionist conflict. We regard the Soviets, the Americans and the French all as aliens, notwithstanding their attitudes, positions and our relations with them and with other countries, whether in the framework of friendship or alliance. They cannot put our case with the same attitude or comprehension as we do. Sometimes a non-Arab may under favourable circumstances put our case within the framework of what is called the convergence of strategies or interests. Therefore, when the Soviets find the Arabs steadfast and capable of maintaining the armed conflict they will support the Arabs and supply them with weapons, but when they find the Arabs always 'collapsing' at the first blow, we cannot imagine them ready to pledge themselves for the sake of the Arabs to a cause which may harm their interests. Those who faint at the sound of the

slightest breeze or at the first signs of a storm should not look for a foreigner to throw them a lifeline at incalculable cost to himself. Furthermore, is it really true that the decision- and policy-making centres of the West, including Europe, America and Japan, had misunderstood the Arab case and are now beginning to understand it? I can tell you this is not so. From the beginning they understood the same position which they understand now. All that has happened is that the Arabs have acquired new means of pressure on the nerves of these centres to make them declare their appreciation of the case which they had rejected or refused to appreciate or admit in the past. Therefore, as the Arabs acquire greater capacity for pressure, won't it be feasible to make them understand more accurately the case which they have rejected before? Yes, they will understand and they will show their understanding in a new policy and direction, more conducive to Arab interests.

We halt here and move to a case in line with this survey of the international scene. As Arabs we are capable of taking part in shaping the directions of Soviet international policies as well as the international policies of the United States.

The strategy of the United States covers the entire globe and is not confined to any part of it. It has the ambition of making the whole world move into its orbit and follow its line of thinking. The same can be said about the strategy of the Soviet Union which is bent on making the world believe in and practice the ideas of the Soviet Union. The two countries are now the greatest powers in the world, but I do not expect this condition to continue much longer. When we study history we always find that any great or major power reaches a zenith of its strength after which it starts to decline. I endorse this analysis, but this is not our subject. We must move from this point to a realistic understanding of international detente, or as they call it the policy of

detente, which is a political state in which the ambitions and strategies declared by the parties concerned are mutually modified. This is how we look on detente; we do not look on it as the termination of the US-Soviet conflict. The formula of what is called 'partition of influence' is not meant as a geometrical concept for dividing the entire world, as if Soviet and American representatives sat together and said to each other: 'I take this, you take that.' This is an incorrect conception of international detente and mutual understanding. These are policies based on a certain appreciation of the factors of power and influence. The Soviet sphere of influence or the American sphere of influence contracts or expands accordingly. Such a phenomenon sometimes occurs through intuition and information, sometimes through direct dialogue. Its directions are subject to some basic strategic factors, namely the economic capacity, diplomatic influence and military capability to maintain the balance of political forces in this or that area or on a global scale as well.

Therefore, the sphere of Soviet influence expands at the expense of US influence, as they win more friends in the world. Thus an important factor in this context is to acquire additional friends to achieve superiority of power and methods in the conflict, by proxy or by the replenishment of reserves required for any limited or full-scale emergencies. The same thing applies to the United States. There are also warning lights which give the alarm at certain danger spots, alerting this party or that. When the Soviets apply pressure somewhere in the Middle East and remove a certain area outside the control or influence of the United States, they treat the achievement as a gain for themselves, although the area in question remains realistically and practically independent of the Soviets. It becomes a Soviet gain, simply by severing that area from the sphere of the political influence of the United States. The United States

would view this result as a preliminary stage of a political operation. The Soviets would then embark on the second stage in which they try to bring this 'neutralised' area under their influence. There is no other way. This is how the Americans and the Soviets behave in all parts of the world.

What happens then when the Soviet Union moves into the Middle East, this sensitive area with its well-known strategic value as the Americans conceive it?

With all this I want to explain to you the manner of our thinking. When the Americans consider this area sensitive in their strategic calculations they do not do so because of its oil resources, as some people think, or because of their need for oil, or on account of the sensitive situation of the area from the strategic and military angle only, but also because of a major factor which may have technical and political priority at this stage over the other considerations. Whoever enjoys effective influence in the Middle East will be able to influence Europe and Japan. This is the principal factor which may have priority over the other two considerations which I mentioned before. Where does the power of the United States lie? What is the principal element in its strength outside the territory of the United States? It lies in the alliance of Europe and Japan with the United States. But when the sources of oil become independent, Japan will be able to deal with the Arabs directly, without any need to have American protection for its interests, as the United States puts it to the Japanese. As Japan imports all the materials required for its industry, its lines of communication and the maintenance of its industries depend on the United States for protection because Japan has no army capable of discharging the function, due to the consequences of the Second World War. The United States also fully realises that the independence of Arab oil and the direct dealing of Europe

and Japan with the Arabs to safeguard their oil needs will weaken its grip on Europe and Japan.

The United States therefore considers any intrusion into this area of a world power in competition with itself in international strategy a serious matter. Hence any Soviet intrusion in any measure into the Middle East is regarded as ominous by the United States, which may be driven, because of this exceptional threat, to act with some flexibility in South-East Asia for the sake of strengthening its grip on the Middle East and similar areas of the world. The departure of the United States from South-East Asia was not a clear-cut case of expulsion but a mixture of expulsion and withdrawal. The fighting will of the Vietnamese and the support of the Soviet Union were the decisive factors in expelling the Americans, but they were not the entire reason for making the Americans abandon South-East Asia at that particular time. The United States was left with two alternatives, either to put exceptional emphasis on the Middle East or hang on to two hot spots simultaneously and thereby dilute its effort and weaken itself on both fronts. There were also additional factors related to the Soviet-Chinese conflict, the fear of any expansion of Soviet or Chinese influence in that area as a result of the continuation of the fighting, the hopes of the potential effect of the conflict between the Soviet, Chinese and Vietnamese interests, and other facts related to other international fields of conflict. Such were the factors which compelled the Americans to withdraw from South-East Asia and concentrate on the Middle East as a first priority area as well as other parts of the world which enjoy obvious priority over South-East Asia.

When some Arabs blame the Soviet Union for its lack of response and sluggish support we must take all this into account. We do not want to be defence advocate for the Soviet Union, but we must understand the way in which the

Soviets think; we must learn how to deal with international politics without either submitting to them and becoming enmeshed in their game or ignoring them. That is how we in Iraq understand international politics. We do not neglect them, fall into their traps or succumb to them. We deal with some people as friends by virtue of the convergence of our strategies or interests and we deal with others as enemies or opponents on account of the divergence of our strategies or interests on which policies are based.

We understand the policy of the Soviets in this way although Egypt has longer experience with them. It is also difficult to understand them easily or follow their line of thinking because of their nature. It is likewise difficult for them to elaborate on the background to their strategic conceptions. Yet our dealings in international politics and our continuous concern with its analysis in pursuit of the defence and immunity of our country and our Arab homeland induce us always to take into consideration the calculations of international policies whenever we try to assess the surface phenomena resulting from them.

Therefore we believe that the Soviets think in such a way that they do not want to take risks on behalf of any party in the Middle East whatever relationship they may have with it, as long as they cannot guarantee the stability of this relationship for a long period according to the concept which serves their strategy. This is in addition to the considerations of world peace as they see it. They know that in return for a friendly stake in the area they will lose another stake or forfeit another opportunity somewhere else in the world as a result of American pressure and the policies of the United States and its allies.

We consequently must not expect the Soviets to support us without assuring them of our friendship in the form which they consider would serve the objectives of their international strategy through joint action. We believe that

there are certain factors which have not been exploited as they should have been to bolster the potential of the Arab nation to confront the enemy, to increase the international importance of the Arabs and to act from stronger positions in influencing the trends of international affairs whether in relation to the United States, the Soviet Union, Europe or any other power.

Some of our brothers say this about us. They say that we are unable to understand international politics because we imagine that the Arabs can destroy the Zionist entity which they are unable to do. This is correct. We should indeed be lacking in political understanding if we called for the destruction of the Zionist entity at this stage, but this is not the case; we do not pursue such policy now. We do not say and we do not imagine that the Arabs are capable of smashing the Zionist entity now, nor do we imagine that the world would allow them to do that at this stage. What we say to our Arab brothers is this: come and let us examine the situation together. Let us ask: have we used all the potential we find available, to increase our own power both at the regional and Pan-Arab levels? Have we made use of such potential to put greater pressure in a wider sphere of international politics in the service of liberation action against the Zionist enemy?

This is the fundamental difference between them and us. Yet we find ourselves in the end regarded as if we are outbidding and the others are more realistic in their assessment. This is the basic point: how are we supposed to act? Perhaps you have observed that despite the conflict of views we have remained for a very long time bent on expressing our views quietly and without resorting to abuse, especially in regard to the governments with which we are determined to maintain fraternal relations and open bridges for joint work and co-operation in the future. But we have a different method of expressing our policy to those govern-

ments on which we passed a final judgement. The essence, however, remains the same in our outlook on ideological issues. What may vary are only our forms of expression, information and political action.

Thus you can see that we have expressed our standpoint for a very long time in this style without any rupture in relations or break in the dialogue, in the hope that this may help them to understand us and help us to understand them better. We can try jointly to look for the common road which may possibly lead us to some of our objectives, if not all of them. But the overriding condition for such a relationship is that no one should try to prevent us from carrying on with our struggle for the full achievement of our long-term strategic aims.

We absolutely refuse to take any part in any joint Arab effort which blocks our route of principles, neutralises the capacity of the Arab nation for action, denigrates our principled outlook or closes the way to our long-term aims. Any step taken by our Arab brothers, however limited it may seem to us and far-reaching and comprehensive it may seem to the others, will have our support and participation, subject to the conditions which we have just mentioned.

These are the basic ideas relating to this subject.

Q. Were the details of this point of view submitted to our brothers and the confrontation states to enable them to understand the position? I think there is no essential difference over the Palestine case or the liberation of the land.

A. The basic difference revolves around the future and the potential of the Arab nation. Such differences have their own ideological and educational background. We believe that the Arab nation is in command of potential which has not yet been used, whereas some of our brothers think that this potential has been fully utilised. I cannot imagine that

there is any patriotic Arab ruler in possession of all the means for the recovery of the usurped Arab land who will say: No, I do not want to recover my usurped lands. Whatever we may think of such a ruler I cannot believe that he will answer in the negative if we ask him if he wants Palestine or not, if no exceptional effort is required of him and all the necessary conditions are made available to him. No patriotic Arab ruler would dare answer in the negative. Apart from foreign agents, the worst Arab citizen would not hesitate to recover Palestine if it could be done without difficulty. The basic difference is about the method of recovering Palestine. What is the road which leads us to such a goal? Such are the essential points in the debate. The difference does not revolve around the road we take in minor or secondary matters, but rather around the main course of our Pan-Arab struggle wherein the strategic end merges with its vital means.

Q. I fully understand your Excellency's words. Do you mean there are certain countries like Egypt which have suffered a number of wars and have not said that the means were exhausted or that there was no other solution?

A. We have our own interpretation of this subject. We think that the Arabs are brought together at this stage by conditions of war rather than by conditions of peace. This applies to the Arabs whether they are in one region or different ones. The people of Egypt, for example, are brought together more by the circumstances of war than by the circumstances of peace. The same thing applies to Iraqi people. What is the reason for this? There are two fundamental reasons which we as Arabs must understand and take into account.

First, our divisive regional characteristics reveal themselves more in the circumstances of peace than in the circumstances of war, and of joint Arab effort for the

achievement of a specified objective of Pan-Arab struggle or to meet a common challenge. The conditions of the Pan-Arab upsurge, the mobilisation of energy and feeling under circumstances of danger are fundamental factors strengthening the joint action. The regional characteristics which sometimes prevent serious participation in the preparations for the confrontation are more pronounced under the circumstances of peace than under the circumstances of war.

Secondly, our countries are known as developing countries. This is an expression which is devised to alleviate the effort of saying 'backward' countries. What does backwardness signify at this stage according to our views?

I am not saying that our countries are not enlightened politically. What I would like to say is that we as a whole have not been able to establish firm traditions in national action and the reconstruction of our countries. I say traditions and not policies; for the traditions are the inherited accumulation of policies, values, culture, laws and forms of dealing, as we conceive them. Our people still regard their ruler with suspicion if he shows some political flexibility. They do not give him the chance to continue to exercise it for the time which he deems necessary, because of the fact that such political flexibility has been used throughout our modern history as a cover for the Arab ruler to have time to carry out his ideas without any respect for the will of the people. I am talking about the history of the whole Arab homeland and not any specific part of it, so as to understand the psychological aspect of our people and its connection with historical realities. This aspect is not a manifestation of haphazard behaviour, but a phenomenon with its own causes and history. When our people examine our modern political history and the conduct of their rulers, they invariably find that flexibility has always been used to cover retreat and sometimes reversion and treason.

Therefore whenever an Arab ruler talks about flexibility he encounters the qualms and suspicions of his people. The opportunity which the Soviet people give to their leaders as a result of the traditions accumulated over 60 years is not the same opportunity that the people of Iraq give to their leadership which has been in office for not more than eight years, apart from other considerations. The same applies just as well to Egypt, Syria, Jordan and all other Arab countries to varying degrees.

Therefore to mobilise our people with exceptional potential against the Zionist enemy, according to various views, is one of the basic and appropriate means of mobilising this potential to confront the enemy in this particular phase. The imperialists are well aware of the regional characteristics which reveal themselves under the circumstances of peace. They will accordingly utilise them as a third factor to weaken us under such circumstances and undermine the potential of joint action. Our people have not yet reached the desired level of political maturity and consciousness, although this is not the problem which is hindering the Pan-Arab liberation action. This is a point which we must include in our political calculations, not as an excuse for retreat but to help us in understanding our responsibilities for treating it energetically and in a revolutionary manner. Therefore what we believe in is militancy combined with political action and the preparation of the requirements of war. At the same time we have the opportunity to take political action and develop its means and our own effectiveness in them. Militancy must not be absent from politics, or vice versa. This is the central point of our policy for the confrontation with the Zionist enemy and the prevailing international circumstances, i.e. preparation for war, simultaneously with resort to some form of political action. We must wage war when we find this necessary and correct. A balanced use must be made of both means, based

on careful calculations and a uniform assessment of a single strategy with a recognised central aim, as well as specific phased objectives and with all the requirements made available and known in advance.

During the Rabat Summit Conference of 1974 we presented a complete conception of this subject, or rather this vital section of it in particular, and emphasised that the Arabs must not appear as if they could never understand politics or were bent on the suppression of others' rights as comprehended by the international community. At the same time, the Arabs must not live in a world of illusions and stray from the true course of facing the Zionist enemy and imperialist plans.

We therefore call on the Arabs to exploit any political opportunity when it offers itself or when they achieve an opening for it. We also believe that the imposition of a kind of truce, which weakens our military potential and capacity for mass mobilisation and leaves us with political weapons only, will undermine our political position, just as the preparation for war, regardless of politics, remains a reckless and impulsive approach.

This is our opinion as I have outlined it. In reference to the financial support given by the Arabs to Egypt during and after the October War, I say that although it was small and inadequate in relation to the part played by Egypt as the front line of defence of the whole Arab nation, it was immensely different as you realise when you compare it with the present financial support. I do not mean by this that we should go on fighting according to the same formula of the October War of 1973. What I mean is that we should keep up the atmosphere of war to strengthen our political approach and enable ourselves to exploit any suitable opportunity which offers itself. To maintain an atmosphere of war and prepare its requisites will enable us to enter any war successfully at the time of our choosing.

Q. I believe that adherence to such a programme will make agreement possible between the Arab leaders as well as genuinely serve the case of our nation.

A. The main approach for the achievement of the phased aims is to recover one piece of territory after another and at the same time to maintain the atmosphere of war while continuing political action.

Do you know what is the most chronic problem of the Arab rulers? One of the main problems, as we see it, is that when some of us — and occasionally all of us — do something useful, we believe that it is the end of everything and no one else should be allowed to discuss our action. When an Arab ruler leaps over a narrow stream he imagines that he has crossed the Atlantic. Please do not think that I mean by this the crossing of the Suez Canal. I never resort to double meaning, but always speak directly. We are proud of the 1973 War and the achievement of the Egyptian Army. As Arabs we take pride in this army and its crossing of the Suez Canal. No double meaning is implied at all in my words, but I am only speaking as an Arab. Take another example, is it permissible for the Iraqis, after their nationalisation of the oil, to bar anyone from any political discussion with a different point of view simply because it was the Iraqis who nationalised the oil?

We have always to bear in mind that any great work we perform is only a small part of our long march. When we keep this in mind, as Arab rulers or leaders, we shall then be able to accept discussion, modesty and interpretation. We shall then be able to give and take and listen to the opinions of others. By simply believing that the others are no more than students and that we alone are entitled to give instructions nothing useful will be achieved. We must accept that in our relationship with our people and with each other we are both teachers and students at the same time. Sometimes we listen and take lessons and sometimes it is our turn to give such lessons.

Such a relationship does not exist now. The other point is that we usually compete with each other with wrong formulas and methods throughout the area of the Arab homeland.

This is a vast arena with room for more champions. Sometimes we imagine that it is too small for us to compete, whereas it can absorb greater numbers and much more effort once we accept the same aim, which is the realisation of the ambitions and hopes of the Arab nation based on liberation, unity and the construction of the new society on a basis of justice and equality.

Sometimes the Iraqi citizen finds Iraq too small for him and thinks of going abroad. The same applies to the Saudi, the Kuwaiti, the Egyptian, the Syrian and so on. This is an actual fact. I am putting to you our reality — the reality of the deficiencies I see as an Arab citizen in the Arab nation.

One more point is related to inter-Arab tensions. Now let me talk about Iraq and take the example of our problem with Syria, so that I may give you a picture to illustrate what I have been saying. As Iraqis we have always been resolved to commence with any step, provided that such a step would not interrupt the continuation of our longer march. The question of the tension between us and Syria and its causes are well known, but when the 1973 War broke out we did not say that our relations with Syria were unsatisfactory and we could not do anything to help her, on account of her rulers not allowing the passage of the nationalised oil over their territory, insisting on severe and humiliating conditions and also stopping the flow of the Euphrates water and thereby causing not only problems but even social and economic disasters. Yet when the fighting broke out we forgot all that in view of the greater matter. We had before us a common step which might not achieve all our aims, but was nevertheless a step towards those aims. We had to co-operate. I am talking about this now to give you a picture of the relationship between us and Syria

and to correct any notion that we may harbour a special Ba'thist sensitivity towards the Syrian regime.

The other point about the Arab rulers is that they often talk with their eyes set on the publication of their statements by themselves or by others. They speak under the influence of this kind of psychology without any regard to such careful thought and objectivity as may be compatible with the potential and the correct intentions of the joint action leading to the required step in a way compatible with the available resources and conditions of the present stage.

Finally one of the main points related to the nature of Arab rulers is that each of them views any common issue from the angle of the political gain which may accrue to him according to his own calculations with no concern for the advantages of joint action unselfishly undertaken.

Q. What is behind the call for the Arab Jews to return to their countries?

A. It is good of you to have reminded me of this subject. It will help us to explain one aspect of our understanding of international politics and world public opinion. Our case must be properly understood by world public opinion, not as a matter of religious conflict between the Arabs and the Zionist entity, as the Zionists try to make it out and as some Arab policies and information media suggested in the past, but as a matter of a long-term Arab objective which calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state in which all religions and all citizens regardless of their faith can live on a common territory under one sovereignty with equal rights and Palestinian identity. To make this view well understood we must give convincing, practical evidence which includes granting the Iraqi Jews the opportunity to return to Iraq and Syrian Jews to return to Syria and the Moroccan Jews to return to Morocco, exactly as the American, French and German Jews may return to their original homes. By doing

this our call for the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state embracing all the original inhabitants will find appreciative ears in the world, in addition to the other considerations.

If we say that anyone who emigrated to Palestine after 1948 and settled there ought to return to his original home, we are obliged in the first place to bring the Iraqi Jews back to their home.

3
The realistic approach to the Palestinian cause

Speech of Saddam Hussein
at the 13th Arab Engineers' Conference
27 January 1977

Our brother Falah Jabr described me in engineering and revolutionary terms[1]. I thank him for his description. Let us begin from this point. I am an engineer on probation and I believe that the patriotic rulers and leaders of the Arabs are all under probation. Our people have learned over many years to prolong the period of probation before granting their confidence in view of the bitter experience of the past. Many colleagues of yours have forgotten, after a spell of time, their basic training. The same thing is true about so many 'political' engineers who lost their characteristics after a period of time along the road of the Arab nation's struggle. The common denominator in both cases is the failure to maintain the conditions for success for the qualification originally acquired.

These observations are not technical and academic. I am talking on the basis of two factors. The first is that I am an 'engineer' on probation, as I said; the second is that there are many engineers among our nation capable of participation in the reconstruction work in the various fields of politics, culture, engineering and so on and this promises a bright future, however dark the outlook may seem now.

On the basis of this belief we can discuss the most impor-

[1] Falah Jabr, General Secretary of the Arab Engineers' Federation, asked Mr Saddam Hussein on behalf of the Arab Engineers to address the Conference, saying that Saddam Hussein is an engineer of Revolution.

tant Pan-Arab issue which occupies the mind of every Arab citizen, namely the Arab-Zionist conflict.

In a foreign country I had a meeting with a senior official who went on to talk about peaceful solutions as he and others like him saw them. I asked him, 'Has there ever been a prophet from outside this area?' The question took him by surprise as we were discussing international affairs and not the subject of prophets. Before he could venture a reply I said to him, 'I shall give you the answer. No prophet has ever appeared outside this area. All the prophets and messengers of God appeared here from among the sons of this area. This shows that the peoples of this area have their own characteristics which other peoples do not have. One of these characteristics is that they are not ruled by materialistic factors and conditions only, nor do they feel bound by *faits accomplis* and prevailing factors. They have always been in the habit of overcoming the prevailing factor and going beyond it.'

Therefore do not be misled by the current factors and phenomena into believing that the Arab people may be tamed and made to swallow the *fait accompli* because the assumption that the Arab people will submit to any *fait accompli* is not supported by any evidence, neither in the past nor in the real present situation. You must understand one of the vital facts of the Arab homeland which shows that the Arab rulers have not reached their positions by the conventional liberal means of democracy as in the West. Beware of relying on the percentages which are announced in connection with the elections held in the Arab countries. We are all capable of producing higher percentages than have been produced in the past. What you must recognise is the actual proportion which such percentages represent of real public opinion. Only then can you include this in your political deliberations.

As these rulers were not elected by the conventional

liberal methods of democracy, you must expect them to depart by unconventional means similar to those which brought them into office, once the people lose their confidence in them as a result of their deviation from the principal causes which they championed or used as a means of gaining power. This includes the issue of Palestine. You must bear in mind that all Arab rulers who reach their positions as a result of *coups d'Etat* or national revolutions took up the cause of Palestine as a central slogan to move the masses and prepare the ground and conditions for their takeover of the government.

Any solution of the Palestine question must, therefore, be a fundamental solution which is satisfactory to the people. Even if you have the full authority of all the Arab rulers behind you, you will find yourself later on, after the fall of this or that ruler, in a critical situation with a new set of circumstances. Any new ruler will find himself bound to differentiate himself from his predecessor in one way or another. The question of Palestine will be stirred up once more, if only for reasons of political expediency and without any reference to ideological considerations.

For this reason I think that the Arab people will never submit to any decision which they do not believe provides the ultimate conclusion to their long-drawn struggle which started in 1948. This is what I said to the senior official I mentioned before.

Without any exaggeration or attempt to outbid any of my Arab brothers, the basis of the projects discussed at the present time does not even represent the minimum demands of our Pan-Arab struggle. Furthermore, I believe that the Zionist enemy will not accept even the aims which are now being declared by some Arab rulers.

Someone may ask: if our enemies are not going to accept the solutions submitted by some Arab rulers, why not embarrass them by offering such targets and then win world

public opinion in preparation for another target? Let us pause here for a little before we tackle this logic.

It is known that the number of the Arab nation is now about 140 million against $3\frac{1}{2}$ million living in the Zionist entity. The Arab nation was poor and is now rich. There were also barriers preventing the Arabs from acquiring scientific knowledge and technology, but these barriers are less formidable now, thanks to the changed circumstances of the world and the oil factor. Therefore the rate of development towards the attainment of any objective will be faster than it has ever been. World politics is developing gradually towards the emergence of more than one centre of influence and polarisation. There are now two polarisation centres which allows only limited scope for political flexibility in the struggle for our Pan-Arab aims during this stage. But when there will be six polarisation centres or more in the world, for example, under different circumstances and factors of international politics, the field of action in which the Arab nation can struggle for its aims will be much larger. Such a possibility is not imaginary. In the next twenty years you will see how new leading centres of polarisation will emerge in the world in addition to the present two centres. This will give wider scope for flexibility in political action leading to the Pan-Arab aims than there is now.

Undoubtedly these fundamental factors make us look at the future with optimism. This is our outlook and that is how we reach our conclusions in the light of which we lay down our policies. We find no justification for despair, not for emotional reasons or transient political factors, but because of those factors and others. Some of our brothers accuse us of political auctioneering, ambiguity and confusion between tactics and strategy when we step up our Pan-Arab struggle and the fight against the Zionist entity in particular. We say that if somebody asked the Arab rulers whether or not they wanted Palestine back without much

trouble they would have answered without exception in the affirmative. But is this possible?

Of course not. The basic difference is, therefore, about the effort required for the achievement of that aim and the conditions necessary for strengthening that effort. All these matters are related to the basic attitudes and interpretations on which we have given our opinion more than once.

Now we go back to the same subject. Some people say: if the Zionist enemy is going to reject this limited solution which falls short of our fundamental aim, why not accept it and embarrass the Zionists in front of the world powers? We believe that the development in the positions of world powers has not occurred at all as a result of their taking up a principled view of justice, but rather and primarily because of the new position occupied by the Arab nation in two main areas, namely the development of the military power of the Arabs and their readiness to fight as evidenced by the October War and the emergence of new factors favouring the Arabs including the oil and the possibility of using it as a political weapon.

In 1971 and 1972 we were looked upon as being incapable of understanding politics. During the October War some of our officials visited certain Arab brothers and proposed the use of oil as a weapon in the battle but received no positive response. A few years before that Iraq submitted to the meeting of the Arab Defence Council[1] the

[1] During the meeting of the Joint Arab Defence Council held on 27 January 1973, Iraq put a proposal for joint Arab action based on the use of oil as a weapon by nationalising the foreign oil interest and all other interests of any state which did not withhold economic and military aid from the Zionists. The proposals also involved the establishment of a real military unity between the confrontation states with a unified command and battle plans. The idea received no favour among the Arab governments which either kept silent about it or doubted its feasibility.

use of oil as a weapon in the battle, but the proposal was privately ridiculed. This was obvious to us from the evidence of various responses including the final shelving of the proposal. Yet a year or two later, part of this proposal was put into execution during the war, although not to the extent which we wanted. As it was nevertheless used, albeit to a limited extent, it has become evident that it can be carried further under suitable and compelling circumstances. The use of oil as a political weapon is a matter which alarms the world powers with influence in the Arab-Zionist conflict.

World public opinion and international policies were not changed because it was shown for the first time that the Arabs had a case. The change was brought about by the need to face the eventualities and especially the new power and influence coming into the hands of the Arabs. To move forward towards a stronger position with the maintenance and development of the factors of victory is essential for any serious development of world public opinion and the international situation in favour of achieving tactical objectives along the line of the strategic aims and in preparation for realising these strategic aims at a later stage.

However delicate and eloquent we may be in our diplomatic language I do not believe that this will bring about any drastic transformation. Such a transformation can only be achieved by convincing all the parties concerned that the Arabs are moving day after day to advanced positions militarily, economically, politically and technologically as well as in the use of oil and their capacity to develop and influence world policies effectively. It must be seen that this is the actual position of the Arabs now. The improvement of our international position depends, therefore, on our own strength, oil resources, etc. On the other hand, and as I have said, we look upon ourselves as engineers on probation. The Arab nations look upon their

rulers with justified suspicion, of varying degrees and kinds, depending on their assessment of the history of the ruler, his treatment of the masses, his achievements and the clarity of his general plans for dealing with the basic issues in the spirit of true patriotism. Furthermore, the general standpoint of the Arabs has not reached the necessary ideological and political maturity for a number of reasons. Therefore, a flexible policy of political action must be carefully worked out in relation to a clear strategic objective, otherwise the people will consider it as a cover for retreat and reversion. Contemporary history has shown that when an Arab ruler talks about flexibility it is usually the sign to retreat and fall back. We have no strong evidence to show that Arab rulers have acted with flexibility as a means of making a qualitative and revolutionary advance at a later stage. Talking of peace without mobilising the potential for war, without strengthening the relationships of trust and confidence between the rulers or leaders and their people and without building up the factors which make Arab policy seriously effective in world affairs will leave the people suspicious or rebellious or temporarily despairing and liable to expose elements of weakness.

When we say that we must keep the question of the struggle boiling we do not overlook international influences. There are some misconceptions about the influence of international policies because some people ignore the national element in the capacity of the peoples and their part in effecting change and moving forward.

We must not imagine that the United States and the Soviet Union sit together and make plans for the world as they wish. If we think that this is the situation where then will be the role of the people in effecting change? This kind of conception of world politics is erroneous and deviationist. On the other hand, there is the other idea which completely ignores international factors and says

that we must rely on our own ability. This is also dangerous and wrong and may lead in the end to national defeat. We believe that we must first create the conditions which strengthen the intrinsic ability of our people and enable courageous steps to be taken in every field. We must then bring in the secondary factors and use them correctly in their proper circumstances and to the desired effect. We must understand international politics and utilise its currents without having to become enmeshed in its game. Here we differ from some of our brothers who accuse us of inability to understand international politics. No, we do understand it, but our understanding does not lead us to subject our own national element to its trends and effects. Nor do we give it an exaggerated importance which weakens the morale of our people. We do not either overlook the importance, the trends and results of international policies or the need for dealing with them or using some of them in support of our struggle.

We are fully aware that objectively the trend of international policies does not allow at the present time the destruction of the Zionist entity. Yet some people say if this is the case, why do you prevent us from carrying on political activities compatible with this reality?

Our answer is that we must not look at this reality as the end of everything because facts in international politics are relative and change according to the factors affecting their movement and direction. The ability of the Arab nation plays a decisive role in developing those facts which affect the Arab struggle. Therefore what is currently a fact in international politics today will not be the same at a later stage and the tide of progress is moving always in favour of the Arabs according to our calculation.

Hence international politics, as we see them at this stage, allow the Arabs to regain their lands occupied since 5 June 1967 as soon as they are ready to do so.

On the basis of our understanding of the situation, we call on the Arabs to strive for the unconditional achievement of this objective after the preparation of all the required conditions. We can then enter into political discussion on the lands occupied before 5 June 1967. The mobilisation of our people is required for this basic strategic aim and the exploitation of all the available opportunities for this or intermediary objectives. We must not restrict our policies and the mobilisation of our people to the question of regaining the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights as people are doing now, lest we should forfeit even these aims.

We are not against political activities, but any flexibility without a basic strategic aim and serious requisites for the forward move at a later stage will only become a cover for reversion. But when flexibility becomes a part of the revolutionary process moving towards the basic strategic aim it will then become a step forward. A fundamental point is that we must indicate the strategic aim and make every move at every suitable opportunity a step towards it, rather than bar the way to any progress.

To say that we as Arabs are agreed on the liberation of Palestine and then close the doors against the achievement of the strategic aim of the liberation of Palestine politically, militarily, ideologically, at both official and popular levels, will mean that we are not agreed on the strategic aim and basic methods. In practical terms we shall reach different conclusions from those declared by some Arab parties. Any part of Palestine we may be able to liberate must not be treated as the final goal of our struggle, but we must not hesitate in taking it, once we have the opportunity and the means. We must strengthen the elements of victory in every operation to regain yet another part of our land through a subsequent step. Thus, and in the light of such processes, international politics will develop together with the positions of our friends and the attitudes of our enemies.

Our potential will likewise develop with the development of our positions. The Arab nation will always find at its disposal additional potential which may be used to create new factors on Pan-Arab and international levels, leading to further advances.

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